



AUG 31 1999

August 25, 1999

CalFed Bay-Delta Program
Rodeo Inn
808 North Main Street
Salinas, CA

Dear Hearing Members:

The San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau is unanimously opposed to the CalFed Bay-Delta Program that is proposing to solve the Bay-Delta problems on the backs of our state's and Central California's agriculture, as part of the Multi-species Conservation Strategy mitigation program (see, other service areas, page 156).

The CalFed Bay-Delta Program has grossly exceeded their authority. To even consider "irreversible and irretrievable" conversion of hundreds of thousands of acres of prime and unique farmlands, especially land on the Central Coast of California, for habitat represents some of the worst planning in recent history.

The supposed, written, aim of the CalFed Bay-Delta Program is to "develop a long-term solution to fish and wildlife, water supply reliability, flood control, and water quality problems *in the Bay-Delta* (this is the opening statement in the Executive Summary). It would appear the nexus between the retiring of agricultural land on the Central Coast of California and the stated program purpose is non-existent.

In reviewing the Executive Summary ES-5 alone, the Summary demonstrates how ridiculous "the Geographic Scope of the Program" problem and "CalFed Problem and Solution Areas" are. The object is to address problems "that are identified in or closely linked to the Suisun Bay/Suisun Marsh and Delta area". To believe that retiring farmland in the Central Coast for habitat, i.e. multi-species conservation, in any way will improve the fish and wildlife, water supply reliability, flood control and water quality of the Bay-Delta is irresponsible. It is even a greater stretch, when the program uses the excuse that State water, flows through the Central Coast. This is not agriculturally used water, but for urban water and the retiring of Central Coast agricultural land will not have any impact on the Delta waters.

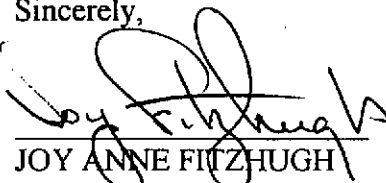
651 Tank Farm Road
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Website: www.slofarmbureau.org

As a second major concern, the very process of pitting millions of people against fish and wildlife habitat is abhorrent. Our State's farmers, industries and urban dwellers must have water to survive. As technology improves, all of segments of the State will continue to improve the efficiency of water use. But this is not the full answer. As opposed to subtracting water from one group of people, look a ways of adding to the water supply.

Lastly, Cal-Fed should embrace the fact that farms and ranches in California actually provide important environmental, open-space and habitat benefits, while being left in private, commercial, agricultural ownership. Our farmers and ranchers currently participate in various voluntary habitat-enhancement programs, yet the CalFed project would circumvent this excellent approach for permanently retiring hundreds of thousands of acres of highly productive farmland, for not benefit.

We request a total re-evaluation of the CalFed Bay-Delta Program, especially the attempt to remove farmland that feeds the people of the State, Nation and World from production. People are part of the environment. Agricultural feeds the people. We must to protect our agriculture from misguided government programs.

Sincerely,



JOY ANNE FITZHUGH
Legislative Analyst